



# News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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## **Four Correctional Officers Suspended In Wake of Killer's Escape from MCI-H**

TOWSON, MD (January 27, 2009)---Four correctional officers from Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown have been suspended for their negligence in the escape of convicted murderer Kandelario Garcia-Ramos from the facility on January 17.

The officers will not be named but range from a probationary employee to a veteran with more than 25 years on the job. Three are male; one is female. All were cited for negligence in the performance of duty and were suspended for periods ranging from five to 15 days according to personnel rules.

Two observation towers, directly adjacent to the institution's perimeter fence, were staffed by two of these officers during the time of the escape. Garcia-Ramos was able to make his escape between the two towers after scaling two fences – one 12 feet high, the other 18 feet high – both topped with razor wire and in plain sight of the towers. The other two officers were responsible for counting the inmates after breakfast movement, or during an inmate count during that morning's shift change as dictated by Division of Correction (DOC) policy and procedures.

Garcia-Ramos' escape was estimated to be sometime between 5:30am and 6:30am that morning. The investigation indicates his disappearance was missed by two routine inmate counts – one directly after the mass movement of inmates back to his particular housing unit after breakfast; and another during a subsequent shift change.

Evidence of a possible escape was not noticed until approximately 8:15am, thus allowing Garcia-Ramos up to an almost three hour window in which to leave prison property.

While proper policies and procedures were in place, the prison administration has received official notification from DOC Commissioner Michael Stouffer reinforcing the Division's expectations of the correct management of inmate populations while in a DPSCS facility.

Due to the ongoing investigation and the fact that these actions are personnel matters which include the right of officers to appeal, DPSCS will not comment more specifically or identify the officers. As the investigation continues, additional disciplinary action will be meted out if appropriate.

The DOC is examining its community notification procedures concerning inmate escapes. Currently, the Hagerstown complex uses a siren to notify citizens of an escape. This alert was used on January 17 after the escape was discovered.

Given the growth of the Hagerstown community in recent years, the Division will begin working with Washington County officials and community leadership to explore ways in which to better educate the surrounding communities about emergency operations and escape notifications. The DOC is also exploring national best practices, including the feasibility of using telecommunications systems to notify citizens.

The Internal Investigative Unit of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) is working with law enforcement to determine the circumstances of the escape and to develop possible additional charges against Garcia-Ramos.

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